MEDITATION
THE ONLY WAY

Ven. Dr K. Sri Dhammananda Maha Nayaka Thero

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Maha Nayaka Thero

“**Sabba Dānaṃ Dhamma Dānaṃ Jināti**”

“Gift of Truth Excels all other Gifts”

This book
“Meditation The Only Way”
is printed in loving memory
of

Mr. Sito Woon Chee
Born: 01. 12. 1950
Passed away: 31. 05. 2010

May the merits that accrue from this
gift of Truth ensure the
Late Mr. Sito Woon Chee
a happy and blissfull state in his next birth.

Ven. Weragoda Sarada Nayaka Maha Thero
31. 05. 2023

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FOREWORD

Since earliest times men have recognized the vast benefits that can be gained through mind control. While meditation was practised in Europe over the last two thousand years, it was in India and later in China that the techniques of mind control were fully recognized and developed. Over a period of more than four thousand years, religious and spiritual disciplines were centred around meditational practices, but it was the Buddha who gave meditation a central place for gaining Enlightenment, and final salvation. All other religious systems use meditation to direct the mind towards external powers, but the Buddha taught us to use meditation to look within ourselves, to gain *INSIGHT* and thus develop ourselves without depending on external powers.

The primary purpose of meditation is to help the individual to control the mind and train it to bring inner peace to the individual who practises it. In this way a great deal of mental energy can be concentrated and thus make the mind capable of harnessing great power. Examples of the kind of power that mind control can give are the 'miracles' performed by saints and religious leaders, e.g., walking on water, being in two places at the same time, going through solid walls, light emanating from the body etc. However, the Buddha taught that such mental power was not the final goal of his teaching. Mind control through meditation brings calmness but the Buddha has taught that such control is merely superficial.

The suppression of the mental defilements is temporary. They can come to the surface of the mind at any time and hinder the spiritual development. These defilements like anger, hatred, greed, pride, illusion, wrong views must be completely rooted out from the mind through the development of *Mettā* (goodwill), *Karunā* (compassion), *Muditā* (sympathetic joy), *Uppekkhā* (equanimity) before one *begins* to tread the path towards emancipation.

Buddhism enumerated five ways in which defilements are removed. They may be summarised as follows: -

1. Overcoming by Repression *(vikkhambhanapahana).* Pushing back of the five mental hindrances through mental concentration, just as a pot thrown into moss-covered water pushes the moss aside.

2. Overcoming by the Opposite *(tadangapahana).* Overcoming the thing that needs to be overcome by knowledge arising from Insight, just as a lighted lamp dispels darkness. For example, the idea of Eternity is dispelled by contemplation on Impermanence.

3. Overcoming by Destruction *(samucchedapahana).* Destroying the fetters that bind us to continued existence through the knowledge of the noble path, just as a tree is destroyed by lightning.

4. Overcoming by Tranquillization *(patippassaddhi-pahana).* Stilling and rendering fetters permanently extinct

from the moment of fruition *(phala)* after entering into the paths *(magga)*.

5. Overcoming by Escape *(nissarana-pahana)*. This is identical with the extinction and Nibbana.

This book aims at explaining why meditation is absolutely essential (it is The Only Way) to give modern man the peace and solace he so desperately needs. It details the long term and short-term benefits that can be gained, how to prepare for it, the method to be used and how to evaluate success.

This book is written in simple language for the benefit of those who are interested in beginning this important practice, to remove their doubts and fears regarding its spiritual and therapeutic values. It must be emphasized that the title 'Meditation - The Only Way' is not meant to imply that Buddhist claim that they alone have the key to salvation. It merely suggests that all human beings can find the ultimate happiness they seek if they begin by training and purifying the mind. Hopefully, 'Meditation -The Only Way' will contribute towards bringing greater peace and serenity to the minds of those who read this book.

Our sincere thanks are due to Messrs. Lim Teong Chuan and Vijaya Samarawickrama for their help in editorial work; Mrs. Chong Hong Choo, Mr. Charles Moreira and Mr. Klaas de Jong of Queensland, Australia for services rendered in various ways in the production of this book; Ven. Dr. Rastrapal, General Secretary of the International Meditation

Centre, Buddha Gaya, India for granting us permission to reproduce an extract from the booklet 'Manual for Vipassana Meditators' by U. Nu and Prof. Lily de Silva of Sri Lanka for her contribution.

K. Sri Dhammananda
1st. October, 1987

CHAPTER ONE

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MEDITATION
OR MENTAL CULTURE

Introduction

We are living in a world community where people think they can find happiness, inner peace and harmony through wealth, power, and social status. They also seek happiness through family relationships, jobs, partners, friends, and sensual pleasure. They try to change the external conditions of their physical, social, and political environment in various ways, because they believe that when these conditions are developed, they can become happy and peaceful. But they forget that at no time will conditions stop changing. Even before the fulfilment of their dreams, things will change and the promise of happiness fades away like the morning mist at daybreak. The harder they try to reach out for happiness, the more elusive it becomes, like catching a fluttering butterfly which is so enticingly near.

People waste a lot of their mental energy when they do not know how to harness it. Energy is like a waterfall. Almost everyday, water pours from the waterfall.

An innovative engineer, after studying this phenomenon, builds a dam to harness this power. The water so

accumulated, is converted into hydro-electric power which lights up streets and houses and keeps the factories running. In the same way, we can accumulate our mental energy, harness it, and use it well to serve others, besides enabling ourselves to experience peace and happiness. The Buddha developed his mental energy to a supreme level which as a result enabled him to finally gain enlightenment.

According to Albert Einstein, even atomic energy which has shaken the whole world cannot train a man's mind. Such is the nature of the mind. Without religious guidance, it is difficult to train the mind.

Man has turned the whole world into a time bomb because of his ego, hatred, selfishness, and cunningness. The life of every living being is in danger, by the various inventions clever people have made but which are misused by those in power. Atomic energy, for example, has been discovered by a human mind, and can be utilised for constructive or destructive purposes. But today politicians seem to be using this energy as a threat to their neighbours and the whole world. Unless they control their mental energy and channel it for productive ends, great destruction can result.

Insecurity Of Mankind

Today no one can live peacefully without being filled with fear, suspicion, and tension. Every being that exists creates some problem for others. They suffer as a result of actions performed out of ignorance. Why do some people create such problems which violate the peace and happiness of

others? It is due to selfishness rooted in an untrained mind. Whatever method we adopt to increase our knowledge in the scientific, technological, or academic fields is by itself inadequate. No proper development of the mind can occur nor can there be real understanding in a mind enslaved by materialistic desires. Due to increasing materialism, man becomes more and more violent, jealous, and engrossed with hatred.

Modern man seems to apply his selfishness and greed to anything he handles. One man cannot trust another although they live together. Even in a densely populated world, men somehow are plagued by insecurity and loneliness because of their lack of confidence and trust in their fellow human beings.

It is very difficult to judge what is in a person's mind. He pretends to be cultured, civilised, educated or religious. Nobody knows him as the crook which he really is. He swindles, cheats, or misleads others for his own benefit. When you reflect on man's crookedness, you can see those animals, in many ways are even better than human beings. Animals are not that cunning and never mislead others. The two-legged animals who live in concrete jungles are unreliable and selfish, and often endanger society by introducing all sorts of immoral practices.

Considering the sophisticated technology at man's disposal, we know that if there is any being who can destroy the world, it will be man himself. In the past, people had some

mythological belief that one day a god or a devil would destroy this world. Now we can see for ourselves who is going to destroy this world. Too much political power is given to a few decision makers (and manipulators). As a result, the fate of millions of human beings is literally in their hands. If one of those men presses a button, the whole world could be reduced to rubble and ashes in minutes. And if he is mentally deranged (like Hitler), the chance of global destruction is even higher. Over the centuries, certain methods have been discovered by wise people which enable human beings to lead a respectable life. The culture of any community is based on these basic moral principles set out by the wise men. But, unfortunately, all these noble methods in culture and religion are misused.

Look Within Yourself

Most people adopt the wrong methods to find peace and happiness. They seek them from outside of themselves, instead of looking within themselves. People foolishly try to overcome their miseries by seeking to please their senses: they drink, gamble and dance under the illusion that they are enjoying happiness. Sense stimulation does not really bring peace and relaxation. The more we try to please the senses through sensual pleasures, the more will we become slaves to the senses. There will be no end to our craving for satisfaction in this way.

We need to develop 'Insight' - into the real nature of things. Without insight, we will be like a person who enjoys the taste of honey oblivious to the dangers from the bees. Many

people, however, are beginning to realise the real source of their happiness and the cause of their troubles. We cannot change the chaotic situation in this world unless we create a peaceful and harmonious environment for others to live peacefully. To do that, we have first to tame the mind which is clouded with evil. It should be filled with purity or wisdom which is gained through the cultivation of religious and spiritual principles.

Writing on Insight, Bhikshu Sangharakshita says:

> "By Insight we mean the clear vision, the clear perception, of the true nature of things - of what in traditional Buddhist terminology is called things 'as they really are'. In other words, to use more abstract, more philosophical phraseology, it is a direct perception of Reality itself. This is what meditation at its height is - this is what Insight, or sight, really is. Such perception is twofold. It is insight into the conditioned, which is to say, the 'world', or whatever is mundane, transitory, and so on; and it is insight into the Unconditioned, that which transcends the world; the Absolute, the Ultimate."

Man Can Be Free

The purpose of religion is to train the mind, not to blindfold mankind with dogma. By controlling the mind, we calm our senses and gain deep relaxation. When we talk of controlling the mind, we do not mean brainwashing. A person must control his own mind willingly and through personal effort. No one should attempt to control the thinking of another. If

we are able to control the mind, then we will be able to control everything that affects us. The mind which is fully controlled and purified will be free from mental disturbances and can see many things not perceivable by others with their naked eyes.

This is the only method to achieve mental purity and emancipation. The Buddha gained his Enlightenment through this method and by virtue of his own personal experiences. Only then did he introduce the way for others to follow.

Although people and animals can be trained in a physical sense, the training of the mind is more difficult to accomplish. Meditation, which is a system of mind training is, therefore, not an easy task and requires earnestness and effort. Because of its intricacies, many people have misused it and misled others for their personal material gain.

The main purpose of meditation is to help us understand phenomena properly so as to remove the fantasies of our imagination which give us a false view of reality. The mind influenced by greed is like a bowl of coloured water which does not accurately reflect the colour of light. The mind given to anger is like a bowl of boiling water which hinders clear penetration of light. The mind overcome by laziness is like stagnant water, all is covered with moss and weeds. The mind agitated by excitement and worry is like water disturbed by the wind. The mind that is habitually in doubt is like muddy water placed in darkness. Here we can

understand the many difficulties we will have to face if the mind is polluted or deluded.

The Power Of Meditation

J. Krishnamurti, the enigmatic spiritual teacher, gives an elucidative definition of meditation. He says:

> Meditation is not an escape from the world; it is not an isolating self-enclosing activity, but rather the comprehension of the world and its ways. The world has little to offer apart from food, clothes and shelter, and pleasure with its great sorrows. What is important in meditation is the quality of the mind and the heart. It is not what you achieve, or what you say you attain, but rather the quality of a mind that is innocent and vulnerable. Through negation there is the positive state. Merely to gather, or to live in, experience, denies the purity of meditation. Meditation is not a means to an end. It is both the means and the end. The mind can never be made innocent through experience. It is the negation of experience that brings about that positive state of innocence which cannot be cultivated by thought. Thought is never innocent, meditation is the ending of thought, not by the meditator, for the meditator is the meditation. If there is no meditation, then you are like a blind man in a world of great beauty, light and colour.

Meditation is very useful in helping a person to live peacefully despite various disturbances that are so prevalent in this modem world. Not everyone can retire to a forest or

to live in ivory towers 'far from the madding crowd.' Through the practice of meditation, we can confront and face the pressures of modern living. Meditation practised conscientiously will help a person to face, understand and overcome every problem pertaining to life.

For meditation to proceed and progress, the mind must be completely neutralised from desire and aversion. Of course, at the beginning, one will find this extremely difficult. We cannot control the mind in a single attempt, specially by force, but should apply right effort through practice and understanding.

Value Of Meditation

Buddhists are never forced or compelled to meditate, but meditation can help us appreciate Buddhist teachings, which explain the nature of life in its proper perspective, the nature of the world and worldly conditions, the nature of suffering, and the fleeting nature of pleasures. By understanding the real nature of component things, we realize that all sensations are mind-created. We also realise that to gain happiness we must calm and control the mind. For meditation practice to produce good results we must properly attune the mind with confidence. We should recognise the value of meditation which contributes towards mental training and peace. Meditation strengthens the mind and helps it to understand things properly.

As body needs washing, feeding, and medicating, we must understand that mind also needs the same things. Wash the

mind through calm meditation. Feed the mind with Dhamma. Medicate the mind, rid the sickness of anger, greed, and ignorance with the supreme medicine of the Dhamma. The body needs clothing to cover nakedness; in the same manner, mind also needs discipline to prevent mental nakedness.

Medical science and therapy are not so effective in helping a person to eradicate mental disturbances such as frustration and worries because they arise not as a result of organic disorders, but are mind created. The remedy for these problems is meditation.

The Most Dynamic Force

The most dynamic force in the world is the mind. A single thought appearing in this invisible mind can either save or destroy the world. This mind is a gold mine but people pollute it. Therefore, it is important that the mind must be properly guided by discipline and reason to avoid mental pollution. The Buddha has said, *'No enemy can harm one so much as one's thought of cravings, thoughts of hatred, thoughts of jealousy.'* When we master our mind, we can overcome such negative thoughts, which can make life a nuisance to ourselves as well as to others.

These internal enemies harm us more than external enemies. We suffer more due to worries, enmity and irritability arising from our mind. Therefore, we have to strive to overcome them by harnessing the mental forces of concentration and understanding.

To practise meditation, one must have strong determination, effort, and patience. Immediate results should not be expected. We must remember that it takes many years for a person to be qualified as a doctor, lawyer, mathematician, historian, or a scientist. Similarly, to be a good meditator, a person will take some time to control the elusive mind and calm the senses. Practising meditation is like swimming against the current in a river. One must not lose patience if one is not able to obtain rapid results during the initial stages.

If there is need to apply force and compulsion to meditate, then we are going against our true nature. Instead of relaxing and letting go, we hold on to our ego and develop more pride. In this way, meditation becomes a game of ambition for personal achievement and self-aggrandizement. Meditation is like kindness: it is a spontaneous experience, not something that can be forced or acquired through strenuous effort.

Misinterpretations Of Meditation

In his booklet *'What Meditation Really Is'* Bhikshu Sangharakshita says many people have misinterpreted the word meditation:

> So many times, I have heard people say 'Meditation means making the mind a blank - making the mind empty.' Others seem to think that meditation simply means sitting and doing nothing. Sitting and doing nothing may be a fine thing to do or not to do, but it is not meditation. Again, sometimes you hear people say, or you even read, that

> meditation means sitting and gazing at your navel, possibly squinting as you do so, or that it means 'going into some kind of trance': … [Some others use] this word 'trance' as a synonym for meditation. Other people think that meditation means just sitting quietly and thinking about things, 'turning things over in one's mind.' Others again think that meditation means getting yourself into a sort of self-induced hypnotic state. These are just a few of the more popular and more wide-spread misunderstandings about meditation.

Quite often meditation is identified with a particular kind of meditation, or with a particular concentration technique. It is not, perhaps, generally understood that there are many kinds of meditation, - many methods, - and many concentration techniques. Sometimes people who just know about one of these, or who practise just one, tend to identify the whole practice of meditation exclusively with that particular method, that particular technique. They may claim that their method is the best one, or even that it is the only one, and that you are not actually meditating at all unless you meditate in that particular way, using that particular technique. The other techniques, the other practices, the other traditions, are, they claim of no value. This is the sort of claim that is made.

Misuse Of Meditation

When people develop a certain aspect of their minds through meditation but do not yet possess spiritual maturity, they may experience various forms of excitement which can be

extreme in some instances. These sensations can cause fear and may even result in mental imbalance. But a person who is spiritually advanced and has gained certain powers over the material world through meditation remains calm. Also, we must be completely altruistic in meditation. While great power can be harnessed we must always have a right view in doing meditation. And that right view is to gain freedom from unsatisfactoriness, not power over the material world.

There is an amusing story of a man who boasted to the Buddha that as a result of great effort over many years he had mastered the art of walking on water. The Buddha remarked that it was not necessary to waste all that time and effort if one's intention was merely to cross a river - for a boatman could easily have ferried him across for a small payment.

One must cultivate right view and aspiration to cross the sea of *samsara* (cycle of birth and death) to attain emancipation. The aim of Buddhist meditation is to calm and purify the mind so that one may gain release and freedom from *Samsara.*

Unscrupulous men may develop their mental powers through meditation and use these acquired powers for diabolical purposes. But in Buddhist meditation, one must develop *vipassana* - (Insight) to realise the real nature of existence and discard selfish or egoistic desires. Insight meditation is the only solution to purify man's mind, to rid him of his evil ways or selfish desires.

There are some people who practise meditation, not for spiritual progress, but for material gain. They want to get better jobs. They want to earn more money. They want their business to be more successful. Perhaps they fail to understand that the aim of Buddhist meditation is not to increase but to decrease desires. Materialistic motives are hardly suitable for one wishing to practise meditation, the goal of which lies beyond worldly affairs. One should meditate to experience some spiritual benefits that even money cannot buy or bring.

Before one begins to meditate, one must have confidence and strong determination. All over the world people talk about air pollution, water pollution and so on but they do not concern themselves enough about mental pollution. Man's mind pollutes the whole world and atmosphere with anger, jealousy, grudges, hatred, and various other evil forces. These negative mental energies can influence the normal cosmic energies and disturb the universe. When our minds are disturbed by fear, anger, and excitement, we not only poison ourselves psychologically but also experience many physical disorders.

Just as an engine which runs for a prolonged period requires cooling down to avoid overheating, even so the mind subjected to various types of mental pollutions needs to be 're-cooled' regularly through meditation.

Impediments To Progress

Some people face difficulties when they attempt to meditate for the first time. They may even experience some uneasiness when they meditate on certain objects. The reason may be that they have chosen the wrong object for their meditation. The wrong object may also create some physical or mental problems, although this in itself is not dangerous.

However, meditation can be a problem to emotionally unstable people who find it difficult to maintain a proper balance in their mind. Beginners may feel frustrated because of their desire to experience good results immediately. If you understand the nature of the mind, you will realise that it is not easy to gain immediate results. We have heard of over enthusiastic young men and women literally going out of their minds because they are over ambitious, adopt the wrong attitude towards meditation and also because they are not properly guided.

Stubbornness, illusion, hallucination, and delusion invariably pollute the mind. To remove such mental impurities and hindrances, one has to strive diligently and make use of one's confidence and determination. Good results will eventually follow. One must have lots of patience in order to progress in meditation.

In Buddhism, as in other eastern cultures, patience is an important virtue. The mind must be brought under control

gradually. One should not aspire for the higher states without proper and systematic training.

Meditation is a gentle way of weakening the defilements which pollute the mind. If people want 'success' or 'achievement' to boast to others that they have attained this or that level of meditation, they are abusing this method of mental culture.

One must be established in morality and clearly understand that to be fruitful in the discipline of meditation, worldly achievements must not be equated with spiritual development. Ideally, it is beneficial to learn under an experienced teacher or instructor to progress along the right path. But above all, one must never be in a hurry to achieve too much too quickly.

The Buddhist Way

The Buddhist way to meditation is through *Sila, Samādhi* and *Panna.* That means - morality, concentration, and wisdom. First, we have to develop our moral background by voluntarily observing certain moral principles and virtues. That is the foundation for a good religious way of life. If we violate the universal law of cause and effect *(kamma),* we will have to experience the bad effects sooner or later. That is why the Buddha introduced a moral code in the form of precepts so that we can live in harmony with existing living beings and maintain a healthy, peaceful atmosphere which will promote the well being of all.

If each and every person in this world were to radiate loving-kindness, compassion and understanding towards others, there would be less fear, tension or suspicion. Everybody can live peacefully.

After that, we have to concentrate more on mental development to achieve calmness and peace. That is *samadhi,* deep concentration. When the mind is calmed, we gain *panna,* or realisation. Through meditation, we can gain calmness of the mind, understanding or wisdom. This is our main object. The confidence and understanding that we gain through meditation are very important as these achievements help us to avoid undue worries and frustration. We sometimes imagine that our problems are due to the influence of evil spirits, ghosts, charms, or black magic or tend to suspect and blame others for these problems. We should try to understand the true nature of life. We meditate not only for our spiritual development but also to maintain our poise and equilibrium in our day-to-day life. If we can maintain patience and tolerance, we will not be easily provoked by others, for we can understand and see things in their correct perspective.

When we develop our mind to the fullest by cultivating virtues and positive qualities, maintaining our human dignity, and observing morality and discipline, we experience real freedom. This makes us appreciative of those who have achieved that end. We pay homage to them. Happy are those who have developed detachment, maintain peace and contentment in their lives.

The highest service man can perform to society is to abstain from evil. A developed and cultured mind can contribute to the weal and happiness of mankind. Meditation is simply not a waste of time. It expands the mind of a meditator in love and wisdom, and enables him to solve many human problems and enlighten others as well.

Through meditation, we will be able to make the right decision when we are in doubt as to which way to turn. These qualities cannot be bought anywhere. No amount of money or property can buy the qualities attained through meditation.

The Only Path

It is beneficial to recollect that the Buddha in the *Satipatthana Sutta* clearly points out that meditation is

Ekayano Maggo – the one and only way,

Sattanam visuddhiya – for the purification of beings,

Soka pariddavanam samatikkamaya – for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation,

dukkha domanassanam atthangamaya – for destruction of suffering and grief,

nayassa adhigamaya – for entry into the Noble Path,

Nibbanassa sacchikiriyaya – for the realization of Nibbana.

The Buddha tells us in no uncertain terms that mindfulness has the effect of purifying beings overcoming sorrow, causing entry into the Noble Eightfold Path and ultimately of realizing Nibbana itself - *magga* and *phala* (the way and the fruit).

Bhikshu Sangharakshita gives a general perspective on what constitutes the spiritual path.

> We can now begin to see in what the spiritual life – in what the Higher Evolution – essentially consists. We may say that it consists in a continual progression from lower to higher, and ever higher, states of being and consciousness: from the world of sensuous experience to the world of mental and spiritual form, from the world of mental and spiritual form to the formless world, and from the formless world to Nirvana, or Enlightenment.

CHAPTER TWO

BENEFITS OF MEDITATION

Reap The Benefits

Be Diligent In Your Meditation

The Path To Deliverance

2

BENEFITS OF MEDITATION

Reap The Benefits

Today many people from all over the world, irrespective of their religions, have become aware of the benefits to be gained through meditation. The immediate purpose of meditation is to train the mind and to use it effectively and efficiently in our daily life. The ultimate aim of meditation is to seek release from the wheel of *Samsara* - the cycle of birth and death. Even though it is a most difficult task, positive benefits are obtainable here and now, if one is serious about meditation. It is appropriate to re-iterate what was mentioned earlier: One should not be enslaved by the prospects of these benefits and lose sight of the real aim of Buddhist meditation. The benefits of meditation can be summarised as follows: -

□ If you are a busy person, meditation can help you to get rid of tension and to find relaxation.

□ If you are a worried person, meditation can calm you and help you find peace of mind.

□ If you are a person who has endless problems, meditation can help you to develop courage and strength to face and overcome them.

□ If you lack self-confidence, meditation can help you to gain the self-confidence which is the secret of success in life.

□ If you have fear in your heart, meditation can help you to understand the real nature of the problems that are making you afraid – then you can overcome the fear in your mind.

□ If you are always dissatisfied with everything and nothing in life seems to be satisfactory -meditation can give you the chance to develop and to maintain inner contentment.

□ If you are sceptical and uninterested in the religious way of life, meditation can help you to go beyond your own scepticism and to see some practical values in religious guidance.

□ If you are frustrated and heart-broken due to a lack of understanding of the uncertainty of life and the world, meditation can truly guide and help you to understand the fleeting nature of worldly conditions.

□ If you are a rich man, meditation can help you to realise the nature of your wealth and how to make use of it not only for your own happiness but also for others' happiness.

□ If you are a poor man, meditation can help you to develop contentment and not to harbour jealousy towards those who have more than you.

□ If you are a young man at the cross-roads of your life, and you do not know which way to turn, meditation can help you to the right path to reach your chosen goal.

□ If you are an elderly man who is fed-up with life, meditation can bring you to a deeper understanding of life; this understanding in turn will relieve your pains and increase the joy of living.

□ If you are hot-tempered, you can develop the strength to overcome the weakness of anger, hatred, and resentment to become a more calm and sober person.

□ If you are jealous, you can understand that negative mental attitudes never contribute anything for your benefit.

□ If you cannot reduce your craving for sense desires, you can learn how to become the master of your sense-desires.

□ If you are addicted to drinking or to drugs, you can overcome the dangerous habit which has enslaved you.

□ If you are a narrow-minded person, you can develop understanding that will be beneficial both to you and your friends and family to avoid misunderstanding.

□ If you are strongly influenced by emotions, your emotions will have no chance to mislead you.

□ If you suffer from certain disorders such as nervous breakdowns and mental disturbances, meditation can activate the positive forces in your mind and body to regain your health, especially if they are psychosomatic problems.

□ If you are a weak-minded person or one who maintains an inferiority complex, meditation can strengthen your mind to develop courage to overcome your weaknesses.

□ If you are a wise person, meditation will lead you to supreme wisdom. Then you will see things as they are, and not as they appear to be.

These are some of the practical benefits that come from practising meditation. These benefits are not for sale in any shop or departmental store. But you can develop them through your meditation. The mind is the key to happiness, and the key to misery. To understand the mind and to use it well is a task that transcends a peaceful and contented life.

Be Diligent in Your Meditation

Some people say it is very difficult for them to practise meditation because there are a lot of disturbances. No one can stop disturbances. In fact there is no place in this world where there are no disturbances. But if we are wise and can understand things properly, we will know how to guard our minds against any form of disturbances.

The advice of the Buddha is: 'When you see any objects, do not be attached to the objects, but use your mind to develop penetrative insight into the true nature of component things.'

Look at things with awareness in their proper perspective. If the object is tempting, it is better not to be absorbed in that object if you really want to calm the mind. Allow the mind to be free of grasping the sense object. When you hear some sounds, pleasant or unpleasant, just listen with awareness. You must have the mindfulness to stop the sound vibration from affecting your mind. Do not allow your mind to absorb it. You have to train your mind in this way to maintain peace. This is the teaching we can learn from Buddhism. There is no academic discipline which can guide us to train the mind.

When Pythagoras was asked to define who a philosopher was, he said something to this effect: 'When all are invited to the feast of life some go there to enjoy, some go there to win name and fame and there are yet others who go there just to look on. These are the philosophers.' What is meant thereby is that the philosopher does not identify himself with life. He looks at life standing as it were outside life as an objective observer.

The mind can be disturbed by external objects and stimuli. When these external objects and stimuli do not disturb the mind, then the mind creates its own mental objects or imagination. After that it tends to develop greed, jealousy, hatred, illusion, or emotional excitement which pollute the mind, according to the object that it creates. Meditation is the only means by which we can guard our mind. Wise people concentrate on any object whether it is pleasant or unpleasant without creating temptation or aversion towards the object.

We spend a lot of time on our body: wash it, clothe it, feed it, beautify it and relax it, but how much time do we spend on our mind?

Many sicknesses and disorders can be avoided if people could devote some time in the course of a day to calm their senses through the practice of meditation. Many people do not believe this or are too lazy to practise meditation owing to a lack of understanding. Some people say that meditation is only a waste of time.

Meditation can help one to overcome ill-health and maintain good health through developing the mind. When the mind is unburdened, it is free to gain knowledge and understanding. When we harbour evil thoughts in our mind, these pollutions can cause damage to our physical body and we experience the bad effects. Medical science agrees that the mind can be the source for all forms of sickness and the same mind can also be used to cure sickness.

In his view, Krishnamurti says:

> "Meditation is the unfolding of the new. The new is beyond and above the repetitious past - and meditation is the ending of this repetition. The death that meditation brings about is the immortality of the new. The new is not within the area of thought, and meditation is the silence of thought."

The Path To Deliverance

Scientific education, if unaccompanied with proper mental training or religious discipline can create disaster. Actually, we see this is happening all over the world. Educated people who have no wisdom and compassion are known to have abused their intelligence by adopting evil means to achieve their ambitions or desires. Because of the application of dry intellect and technology, we face greater problems and threat today than had been faced by our ancestors in the past. All over the world people are fighting each other. Buddhism teaches us that killing for any reason is unjustifiable. It is worse when people fight and kill in the name of religion.

Meditation can contribute a lot to tame the wicked mind. By knowing that good and evil are both in our mind, we should watch our every thought very carefully and act mindfully. We must try to find out the nature of the thoughts which appear in the mind. Examining the thoughts that appear is in itself an act of meditation.

When the conscious 'I' frets too much, worries too much, or grieves too long and too intensely, then troubles develop in the body. Gastric ulcers, skin diseases, coronary diseases and a host of functional disorders are the products of mental and emotional imbalance. In the case of children, the defective eyesight are frequently related to emotional disorders.

If you practise meditation, you can learn to behave like a gentleman even though you are disturbed by others. Through

meditation you can learn how to relax the body and to calm the mind; you can learn to be tranquil and happy within.

Meditation strengthens the mind and enables it to control human emotion when disturbed by negative thoughts and feelings such as jealousy, anger, pride, and envy.

We must remember that every spiritual master in this world attained the highest point of his life through the practice of meditation. They are honoured today by millions because they have contributed tremendous services to mankind through their supreme knowledge, patience and understanding.

Buddhism deals with the workings of the mind and the intricacies of meditation in the most detailed manner. The path to deliverance is a path of mental development. Buddhist devotees are encouraged to practise meditation as far as their inclinations and facilities permit. To shape one's attitudes and behaviour which are conducive to spiritual progress one should meditate on four subjects: the Buddha; loving kindness; unwholesomeness of life; and death. Even if the time spent on these subjects is not much, these four objects of meditation offer protection, and promote the devotee's progress along the Path to Deliverance.

CHAPTER THREE

PREPARING FOR MEDITATION

Selecting A Place

Selecting A Time

Meditation Teacher

Posture

Taking Food

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PREPARING FOR MEDITATION

Selecting a Place

When you first begin to practise meditation, it is advisable for you to find a quiet place where you can relax without being disturbed. Try to find some place away from the turmoil and bustle of busy life. The place can be a room, garden, your bedroom - any place where it is convenient for you. Once you find a place, stick to it. Don't keep shifting the place of practice.

As your meditation progresses, you can begin to practise the exercises at the place of your daily work. There is no need to go into constant seclusion. Remember that when you have developed your meditation, and you can effectively cut off the external disturbances, anywhere can be a good place to meditate.

Selecting a Time

The mind, like the body, works more effectively in a settled routine, and a mental discipline such as concentration necessitates the adherence to unvarying habits throughout the practice of meditation. In the field of meditation, moreover, even a strenuous and discerning worker must adopt fixed and regular times for his mental exercises during

the early stages of his training; for the aim of this practice is more easily achieved by him who is a regular and continuous worker.

The three best periods for meditation are dawn, noon, and sunset, and judged upon the evidence of the personal experiences of the ancients, they are accepted as the most propitious. The hour of dawn is for many reasons better than the other two. This hour is called '*Brahma-muhurta'* the 'divine moment,' and is the period of intellectual awakening, a fact shown by the Buddha's enlightenment. Furthermore, there is considerable advantage, from the physical point of view, in reserving early hours of the day for intellectual training. This is usually a period of bodily calmness and quiescence and the brain is then fresh after the night's rest, so that it is possible to achieve the mental serenity which enables the mind to advance along the path of concentration.

But if, for one reason or another, you find it impracticable to meditate at dawn, then you should decide upon a suitable time for yourself but whatever time you choose, it should be used only for meditation. During this time, you should put aside all other daily activities in order to give full attention to your meditation object. Don't let anything interfere with your practice, and devote a regular time to the practice everyday. Don't attempt to meditate for long periods at the beginning. It is more effective to concentrate fully for short spans. The time can be lengthened as you gain more experience. Meditation becomes part of your day to-day living through constant practice.

Meditation Teacher

Perhaps you feel you need someone to assist, to guide, and to instruct you. It is not always so easy to find a suitably qualified meditation master. If you have any friends who meditate, talk to them; they can be your teachers. If you come across any books or articles on meditation, read them, they can be your teachers. If you are able to find a teacher, remember that a teacher is only a friend and a guide. He cannot do the meditating for you. He cannot do the realizing for you. If you can manage to develop your concentration and mindfulness to be strong, clear, and constant, then your concentrated awareness becomes the teacher; your teacher is within you. But you must have confidence and determination to use your effort.

The recognition of our different characters or temperaments is important for meditation. That is the main reason why the Buddha introduced various kinds of objects for different people to practise meditation according to their mentality and understanding capacity. A meditation master will study the real nature of the person who wants to meditate. He will evaluate his mental development, the nature of his mind, ascertain how far he can understand and appreciate the beneficial effects of meditation and assess if there should be any mental weakness or other hindrances. After ascertaining all these characteristics, the master will then introduce a suitable object for the mind to concentrate. That object should be a neutral one.

Posture

Posture is important to prevent physical problems, such as discomfort, pain, difficulties in blood circulation, headache, backache, or giddiness. Proper posture can help our blood circulation and enable our body to function properly. Those who sit down for many hours may experience numbness and aches. Walking meditation is prescribed by the Buddha to prevent this problem. For this reason, some people prefer walking meditation.

The posture adopted by the Buddha for his meditation is known as the lotus posture. For this posture, you sit on the floor with the right foot on the left thigh and the left foot on the right thigh. The back and neck should be as straight as possible but if the position is found to be uncomfortable, one may move a little to be more comfortable. The essence is not to arouse undue pain and discomfort as these will distract the calming effect of the mind. One should be relaxed. However, such a posture would be difficult for the uninitiated to follow as numbness and aches are bound to occur. The semi-lotus position should be a little easier to adopt. In this posture, the right foot is placed on the left thigh. This posture should be more comfortable than the full lotus position for most. Place the right palm over the left, with the two thumbs touching lightly at the tips.

Taking Food

Actually, there is no restriction as to what we eat but we should not take a heavy meal before a meditation session, especially at night-time. If you take a heavy meal before you

meditate you may experience some discomfort. That is why the Buddha advised the monks and those who observe eight precepts, not to have solid food after midday.

Some people are under the impression that Buddhists should not take meat, but eat only vegetarian food. There is no such precept in the Teaching of the Buddha. However, those who desire to have vegetarian food may do so as a personal preference as it is not a religious obligation.

Those who practise meditation either in the jungles or cemeteries, especially at night, are advised to avoid certain types of meat in order to avoid undue reaction from certain animals whose instinct or sense of smell is so strong that they might be attracted to the meditator.

J. Krishnamurthi in his book *'Second Krishnamurti Reader'* says:

> Do what he will, the man of belief and dogma cannot enter into the realm of meditation. To meditate, freedom is necessary. It is not meditation first and freedom afterwards; freedom - the total denial of social morality and values - is the first movement of meditation. It is not a public affair where many can join in and offer prayers. It stands alone, and is always beyond the borders of social conduct. For truth is not in the things of thought or in what thought has put together and calls truth. The complete negation of this whole structure of thought is the positive aspect of meditation.

Meditation is a never-ending movement. It comes only when your heart is really open. Not opened by the key of thought, not made safe by the intellect, but when it is as open as the skies without a cloud; then it comes without your knowing, without your invitation. But you can never guard it, keep it, worship it. If you try, it will never come again: do what you will, it will avoid you. In meditation, you are not important, you have no place in it, the beauty of it is not you, but in itself, and to this, you can add nothing. Don't look out of the window hoping to catch it unawares, or sit in a darkened room waiting for it, it comes only when you are not there at all.

CHAPTER FOUR

HOW TO MEDITATE

An Overview

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The Body As An Object Of Meditation

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HOW TO MEDITATE

An Overview

Meditation is concentrated awareness or recollectiveness. If you are interested in practising meditation, you must learn how to develop your concentration through *Samatha* or Concentration meditation. *Samatha* refers to the calmness that we experience by controlling and reducing the arising of mental impurities.

On the other hand, after learning how to develop your awareness or mindfulness, you can practise *Vipassana* or insight meditation. *Vipassana* is the insight of clear understanding that we develop through analytical knowledge.

If you are interested in making use of this *samatha* meditation in your daily life, then learn to apply concentration. If you are interested in making use of *Vipassana* meditation then learn to apply awareness to daily activities. In this way you can practise concentrated awareness in the common experiences and events of your daily life.

There is no doubt that *samatha* meditation helps to calm the mind by eradicating many mental defilements and to gain Jhana-absorption. But through *Vipassana* meditation we can analyse every component thing and understand its true nature. Through this method we come to know there is nothing for us to cling to or to accept as a permanent entity which remains and that everything which exists in the whole universe is nothing but relative visible or invisible objects.

Important Methods

As a Doctrine of the mind, the Buddha teaches three things:

to *know* the mind – that is near to us, and yet is so unknown;

to *shape* the mind – that is so unwieldly and obstinate, and yet may turn so pliant;

to *free* the mind – that is in bondage all over, and yet may win freedom here and now.

The Buddha advised us to analyse every component thing and understand its nature properly. The understanding of *Dukkha* or unsatisfactoriness, which we experience in everything, paves the way for us to develop this meditation until we finally gain real wisdom. When we realise the real nature of this universal phenomenon, we do not easily become frustrated or disappointed. With this understanding we will be able to face our problems without fear. The nature of problems is such that no one can change natural occurrences. We simply have to face them. We just have to

try to make use of the things that exist by cooperating with the existing Universal law for our living and satisfaction.

Deliberate or formal meditation, as all other aspects of Buddhism, is graded to suit the convenience, the temperament, the objective, and the level of spiritual development of the individual. As many as forty subjects of meditation can be used as meditation objects. The list commences with ten external devices *(kasinas)* such as colours, objects, fire, on which one can concentrate his mind. A dead body in different stages of decomposition provides ten themes on impurity for contemplation. Reflections on the *Buddha,* the *Dhamma* and the *Sangha,* ethical virtues, liberality, *devas* (divine beings), peace, death, body, and the process of inhaling and exhaling *(anapanasati)* constitute ten more subjects. Meditation on lovingkindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity and the four Realms of Formless Existence *(Arupaloka)* along with perception of aversion to greed for food and the analysis of matter into the four elements (water, energy, air, earth) brings the list up to forty.

The subject has to be selected according to the meditator's temperament and for this purpose, people are broadly categorized according to temperament as lustful, irritable, bewildered, devotional, intellectual and discursive. A subject of meditation, chosen according to one's temperament, enables the development of the mind to the level of one-pointed concentration and perfect tranquillity. In this sense, such meditation is a stepping stone to higher

mental achievement as trances *(Pali: Jhana; Sanskrit: Dhyana)* and the ultimate emancipation through Insight meditation (*Vipassana-bhavana).*

Samatha: Concentration Meditation

Samatha meditation brings the mind to various stages of mental concentration. At very high stages of mental concentration (known as *Jhana),* psychic powers can be developed. However, such high states of concentration are not necessary or practical for most people who have to live the hectic pace of modern life. By calming and strengthening our minds, certain purification processes take place and this mental purification may influence the mind to achieve certain powers over natural phenomena.

Whatever word we use to describe these powers they are worldly and not spiritual. We should not excite ourselves over these so-called 'supernatural' powers. Some mundane phenomena appear in the mind when it is developed. But gaining these powers of mind over matter is not the main purpose of Buddhist meditation. It must also be emphasized that this method is not a new discovery of the Buddha. Meditation masters in India had gained high levels of development and could do ' miracles ' like walking on water, being in two places at the same time and so on. The followers of other religions also practise this form of meditation even to this day. The Buddha also practised this method under certain teachers before his Enlightenment. He realised that such meditation cannot lead him to Enlightenment.

Samatha meditation is concerned with producing a one-pointed mind. One pointedness is a concentrated state in which all the faculties and mental power are directed towards one object. A one-pointed mind is a concentrated and unified mind. A one pointed mind is the opposite of a distracted or scattered mind. Ordinarily our mental states are scattered in all directions but if the concentration is fixed on one object, then we begin to know the true nature of that object. The process of concentration gradually modifies the mental states until the whole mental energy converges towards one point.

What is the purpose of developing a one-pointed mind? If you train your mind in this manner, you will gain calmness and tranquillity and will be able to gather your attention to one point, so as to stop the mind from frittering away and wasting its useful energy.

The attainment of a calm mind is not an end in itself. Calmness of mind is only a necessary condition to develop Insight. In other words, a calm mind is necessary if you want to have a deep look into yourself and to have a deep understanding of yourself and the world.

For most people, the mind jumps at one moment to the past and at another, to the present or future and it is constantly shifting from the past and to the present to the future and from place to place. Therefore, such people waste an enormous amount of mental energy. If you can train your mind to maintain enough concentration, to pay attention to

each task from moment to moment, this is more than enough to begin with! When you are reading, walking, talking - whatever you do in your daily life, act with a mind that is calm, paying careful attention to each and every action. This is mindfulness. Learn to focus the mind on each task and develop awareness.

Live Now

If you want to develop concentration, your first task is to find a suitable object on which you can concentrate. As mentioned earlier, in Buddhist meditation, there are 40 objects of meditation that you can use to develop concentration. You need not use all 40 objects, but must select one which is suited to your temperament and mentality. If you have no teacher to select the object of concentration that is suited for you, then you must experiment and make the selection yourself.

Here are some guidelines to find yourself a suitable object for concentration:

□ The object must be neutral; if it evokes any strong feelings of lust, hate, etc., then it cannot calm your mind but will only make it restless and agitated.

□ The object can be either internal or external: An internal object is inside you. Examples of internal objects are breathing, loving kindness, compassion, etc. An external object means an object that is outside of you. Examples: an

image of the Buddha, a flower, a mountain, a circle of light, a candle flame etc.

□ The object must be pleasing and acceptable to the mind; if the mind constantly rejects the object, the concentration will be weak.

□ Remember that the object that suits you at one time may not be acceptable at another time. For example, after an outburst of anger, it will be difficult to use loving-kindness as an object of your concentration. At such a time, the emotion of anger itself might serve as a better object of concentration.

Once you have selected the object, your task is simply to keep the mind tied to the object just as you might keep an animal tethered to a stake. The key to concentration exercises is to hold the mind to one object at the exclusion of all other objects. By focussing the mind on the object, it will slowly become calm and relaxed.

Here are some concentration exercises that you can develop as formal meditation or as part of your day to-day activities.

Health exercise: While walking up and down, hold only these three ideas in the mind: 'happy, healthy, strong'. Keep repeating those words over and over; concentrate the mind on these words until you can feel the words physically in the body.

Thinking exercise: While thinking of a subject, hold the mind to that subject. Keep the focus of the mind only on the subject under consideration. Do not entertain any extraneous or irrelevant ideas.

Daily routine exercise: When you read a book keep both your eyes and your mind on the book.

When you sweep the floor, keep the mind on the sweeping.

When you dictate a letter, keep the mind on the dictation and not on the secretary.

Learn to concentrate on what you do from moment to moment. This is living in the present.

Vipassana: Insight Meditation

Vipassana is an insight into the true nature of things; *Vipassana* is seeing things as they are. The path that leads to this insight or realization is awareness or mindfulness. The method to develop mindfulness is based on a famous discourse given by the Buddha.

In *Satipatthana Sutta* the Buddha explains how to develop and cultivate the mind. In this sutta, the Buddha offers four objects of meditation for consideration: body, feelings, thoughts, and mental states. The basis of the *Satipatthana* practice is to use these four objects for the development of concentration, mindfulness, and insight or understanding of yourself and the world around you. *Satipatthana* offers the

most simple, direct, and effective method for training the mind to meet daily tasks and problems and to achieve the highest aim: liberation. *Satipatthana is safe for all types of characters, and is a harmless way to train the mind.* You can use this method anywhere at anytime, in a busy office or in the quiet of a peaceful night.

The task is to develop awareness or mindfulness *(sati).* Awareness is a very simple, very common and very familiar state of the mind. In its elementary stage, awareness is paying bare attention to an object. This means you simply observe an object without judging it or thinking about it. Awareness is simply observing or giving close attention without making any judgement of thinking.

The Body as An Object of Meditation

The goal of these meditation exercises is to realise the nature of the body and to be non-attached to the body, to be neither attracted to nor repelled by it. Usually, most people identify themselves with their bodies. However, at a certain stage of mental purification and insight, you will no longer be identified with the body. You will begin to see the body as a bundle of component things.

***Exercise 1**: **Mindfulness of Breathing** (Anapanasati)*

Having chosen your time and place and having adopted the posture most suitable, you are ready to begin. Breathe calmly and naturally, and while breathing, be fully aware of your breath. Be aware of the act of breathing without identifying yourself with this breathing. Acknowledge this process thus:

'Breathing in' 'Breathing out' - if too many ideas or other distractions arise and disturb your concentration, then you might try counting your breath movements: 'Breathing in, 1,2,3,' 'Breathing Out, 1,2,3. ' As the concentration increases, drop the counting and acknowledge the breathing. Try to fix your attention at the point on the nostril where the air makes contact with the body.

Breath may become deep or shallow, slow, or quick, following natural tendencies. Keep the body erect and motionless while being mentally alert; be keenly observant and as motionless as possible. As you gain mastery over this exercise, the body becomes relaxed and you will be very peaceful and undisturbed by events either within the mind or from outside.

While doing this exercise, you should forget daily affairs of all kinds and should not even be conscious of yourself. Only be aware of the breathing process. Just mentally note the inflow and outflow of the breath as it occurs. Early morning is a good time for this exercise.

Exercise 2: Mindfulness of Walking

Walking practice begins with standing on the spot. The standing posture should be an erect body with heels together. Keep the eyes straight forward, neither up nor down. Maintain this posture for the whole of the walking practice. Do not follow the movements with the eyes but with mindfulness.

While standing, be aware of standing; acknowledge you are standing by saying in the mind, 'Standing, standing, standing.' Then move the walking foot. Acknowledge the lifting of the right foot by saying in the mind, 'Lifting.' Push the foot forward and acknowledge mentally, 'going.' Lower the foot, set it on the ground and mentally acknowledge, 'Here.'

The walking exercise consists of three phases: 'Lifting' 'Going' and 'Here'. Acknowledge each phase as you walk mindfully, concentrating on the movements of the walking process until you reach the end of your allotted walking space.

You stop with both feet together in the standing position, saying in the mind, 'Standing, standing, standing.' As you turn around by rotating on your heel, acknowledge each phase of the turning motion: the turning of the heel of one foot and the lifting and setting down on the ground of the other foot. Acknowledge the standing posture. 'Standing, standing, standing.' Then begin to walk, saying again, 'Lifting, Going, Here.' This exercise should be done as slowly and as mindfully as possible.

If any feelings, thoughts, sounds, disturbances etc. arise, you must acknowledge them as they come up. If you hear a sound, say 'Hearing, hearing, hearing'. If some thoughts enter your mind, acknowledge by saying, 'Thinking, thinking, thinking'. After acknowledgement, turn your attention back to the walking exercise. Do not resist the

disturbance, because then you will be concentrating on the resistance and forget the object of meditation.

Exercise 3: Mindfulness of Body in Daily Life

Once you have developed some concentrated awareness with your body as an object of meditation, you must try to clearly understand what you are doing with your body every moment of your working day. While walking, pay attention to the walking movements, observing as many details as you can. Also be aware of yourself when the body sits, stands, reclines. Observe the movements of the body whether in the act of looking at or looking around, whether bending or stretching, whether dressing, washing, eating, chewing, or answering the call of nature. The aim is to hold the attention steady on each event while it is actually present. But do not follow this event with imagined states which are not present. The aim is lost if the body does one thing and the mind thinks of or perceives something else. When both action and thought are united, you will then have 'One pointedness of mind.'

Whenever you have a spare moment during the working day, use your body as an object of concentrated awareness.

Feelings As Objects of Meditation

The task here is to mentally acknowledge each feeling at the moment it arises. You have a lot of work to do if you want to deal with your feelings. You must understand the various kinds of feelings; whether they are pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. You must understand how they come to be, how

they develop after their arising, and how they pass away. Feelings arise whenever there is contact between the senses (eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body) and the objects outside. Feelings must be acknowledged and understood for what they are.

Exercise 1: Mindfulness of The Sense Bases

You must be aware of the sense organs (eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body) and the contact they are having with the outside world. You must be aware of the feelings that are arising as a result of this contact. For example: ear is now in contact with sound (e.g., children shouting and laughing) outside your meditation place. 'Unpleasant feeling arising.' Or body now in contact with hard surface (chair you are sitting on). Not unpleasant. Itching sensation arising in the nose; unpleasant feeling; want to scratch. Acknowledge your feelings just as a gate-keeper might keep an eye on the people going in and out. Use feelings as objects for your concentrated awareness. Then you will understand the nature of your feelings and will be able to exercise better control over them.

Exercise 2: Mindfulness of Feelings in Daily Life

Try to slowly establish some control over your feelings by being moderate in food and by avoiding too much sleep. Try to see the feelings as they arise in the course of daily life. Here are some examples: while waiting impatiently at the bus stop, observe, 'resentment is arising within.' While enjoying food in a restaurant observe, 'Tongue in contact with good taste objects. Greed arising.' When you meet a

good friend, you have not seen for a long time, observe, 'Mind in contact with object of friendship. Good, happy feeling arising.'

Mental States as Objects of Meditation

You cannot run away from your mind. By meditation, you can train the mind to keep calm and be free from disturbances either from within or outside. Apply concentrated awareness to the internal confusion and mental conflicts, and observe or pay attention to all the changing states of your mind. When the mind is properly developed, it brings happiness and bliss. If the mind is neglected, it runs you into endless troubles and difficulties. The disciplined mind is strong and effective, while the wavering mind is weak and ineffective. The wise train their minds as thoroughly as horse-trainers train their horses.

Exercise 1: Watching the Mind

Sit alone and observe the changing conditions of the mind. The task is only a matter of observing the changing states. Do not fight with the mind, or avoid it, or to try to control it. Simply *look* at the mind objectively and try to see it as it is. When the mind is in a state of lust, be aware that this is so. Observe when the mind is in a state of hatred or when it is free from hatred. Observe the concentrated mind and the scattered mind. Observe all these changing conditions without identifying yourself with them. The task is to turn your attention away from the world and focus it on itself: the mind observing the mind to discover its own nature. This is hardly an easy task, but it can be done.

Exercise 2: Watching the Mind in Daily Life

In all kinds of situations, you must observe the working of your mind without identifying with or finding justification for your thoughts, without erecting the screen of prejudice, without expecting reward or satisfaction. While you are at work, sense desire, hatred, jealousy, and other unwholesome states are sure to arise and upset the balance of the mind. That is the time you need meditation to check these harmful elements. For example: Acknowledge, 'mind is worried because I missed the bus. The worry is not in the bus; the worry is in the mind.' Acknowledge, 'Hatred is in the mind because I do not like this food. The hatred is not in the food, it is in the mind. I must carefully observe this hatred in the mind.'

Thoughts As Objects of Meditation

In the *Satipatthana Sutta* is found the awareness way of Enlightenment as shown by the Buddha. Here, the various aspects of the Dhamma or Teaching - mental objects - are mindfully examined and observed as they arise within. For those who are beginning meditation and are unaware of these aspects of the teaching of the Buddha, the mental objects can be taken as the thoughts and ideas that arise within the mind.

The task here is to be aware of the thoughts that arise and pass away within the mind. You must understand the nature of thoughts. You must understand how to make use of the good thoughts and prevent harmful thoughts. Your thoughts need constant watching if the mind is to be purified.

Exercise 1: Mindfulness of Thoughts

Sit alone and concentrate the mind on the thoughts. Watch the good thoughts and observe how they affect your mental state. Watch the harmful thoughts and observe how they disturb your mental state. Simply observe the thoughts dispassionately and so create the opportunity to go beyond them. The moving beyond all thoughts and knowledge brings peace, harmony, and happiness. Just as you might watch people come and go from your room, watch your thoughts passing through your mind. You can slowly reduce the number of thoughts. Every thought reduced adds peace and strength to your mind. If you fight with the thoughts, you can have a very unpleasant task. Simply observe them. Slowly you will come to understand how to control evil thoughts and to encourage good thoughts.

Exercise 2: Mindfulness of Mental Objects

In the course of your working day, try to observe your thinking process. Do not identify with this process: simply observe it. Acknowledge, 'Now my thinking is wrong: I am trying to cheat this man.' Acknowledge, 'The mind is thinking so negatively now. Whatever I think of, I think negatively. Why is this?' Acknowledge, 'This is a good idea that just appeared in the mind. I must give it to Mr. X to use.'

Progress In Meditation

Remember that practising meditation requires patience, persistence, and effort. Lasting progress may take much effort and a long time to achieve. There are no short cuts. No

magic formulae. The process of meditation requires hard work: it is like swimming against the current.

You might be disappointed if you expect immediate or quick results from your meditation. If you are a busy person with many worldly ambitions, you cannot suddenly and voluntarily quieten your mind to the point of removing all thoughts; you cannot suddenly experience a strong and continuous concentrated awareness.

If you hope to make progress in meditation, you have to set yourself some training rules. Training rules are important to the fitness of an athlete who intends to win a race. Likewise, training rules are important to the fitness of a meditator who intends to make some lasting progress. In establishing your self- discipline, be like the guitar string that is not too tight and not too slack: do not lose your sense of harmony.

Good mental and physical health is necessary for *your* progress. You must maintain and generate sufficient bodily and mental energy. A weak and overtired body or mind is a big hindrance to meditation. You must rest your body and mind.

How can you judge your true progress in meditation? It is not easy for a person to evaluate his spiritual progress. Do not judge by momentary states of euphoria, altered perceptions, unusual states of consciousness, occult powers.

Here is a rough rule of thumb for you to measure true progress: if you are experiencing increased states of happiness, peace, and tranquillity, and if you are experiencing decreased states of agitation, depression, worry, anxiety, then you are making true progress.

Meditation In Daily Life

Buddhism teaches us how to maintain mindfulness. When we realise that certain ideas are not dangerous or harmful to us as well as to others, we must try to develop and nurture such thoughts for the welfare of others and for ourselves.

Even when we talk, we must be fully mindful. We have to weigh and judge carefully whether the words we use are hurtful or otherwise. Again, when we are walking, sitting, sleeping, or eating, we should maintain mindfulness. Without mindfulness we may make mistakes and even offend others. We also may harm ourselves in the process. We must constantly be on guard to maintain a healthy mind, in thought, word or deed.

A devout Buddhist will conscientiously recite some stanzas or recitals when he offers flowers, incense, light, etc. before a Buddha image. At such time, in reality, he is engaged in some form of meditation.

Stanzas or recitals for the various types of offerings have been uttered in traditional Buddhist devotions for thousands of years. These recitals are not prayers through which a supernatural power is asked to respond to a devotee's

expressed requests. Instead, these stanzas embody elements for the devotee to meditate on. They range from the virtues of the *Buddha, Dhamma* and the *Sangha* to specific subjects prescribed for contemplation.

For example, as flowers are placed before a Buddha image, a devotee says 'I offer these flowers to the Buddha. By this merit may I attain emancipation. Just as these flowers will fade and wither away so will my body.' Thus, one meditates on the impermanence of the body, a basic subject of contemplation in the Buddhist system of mind training.

The state of concentrated awareness can be developed as a formal meditation. Yet, this state must slowly be transferred into your daily life. It may take much time, effort, and patience but you can apply meditation in your whole life.

If you want, you can always create opportunities to develop some form of concentrated awareness in your daily life. In modern life there are so many duties to perform, so many hurried actions, tense moments, and anxious situations which create such a great waste of mental energy.

In the midst of life's turmoil, set aside some time each day for quiet meditation to strengthen your mind. This is an asset to your daily work and progress. By examining your thoughts and feelings as they arise within your daily routine, you can slowly probe into the inner meaning of things. You can find strength and peace within.

If you can practise meditation in your daily life, then you are fully alive and living in the present. You are completely aware of what is happening within you and around you. In a restless world, you live with an inner peace and calm.

CHAPTER FIVE

EHI PASSIKO - COME AND SEE

An Open Invitation

Power Of Loving-Kindness And Righteousness

Sublime State Of Mind

Healthy Mind And Body

5

EHI PASSIKO - COME AND SEE

An Open Invitation

Meditation need not be given any religious labels. Anyone can practise it. If the mind is ready, it can be trained and made use of for good purposes.

Mental energy can be harnessed to serve oneself as well as others. This energy is the greatest force in the Universe. All the other energies are blind forces, but mental energy is an intelligent force. This intelligent force can be used to divert all the other existing energies for wholesome and beneficial purposes. Otherwise, people may misuse this energy for destructive purposes.

Meditation is good for everybody irrespective of race, religion, or creed. Meditation is the benevolent force to make this world a truly beautiful and peaceful place to live in.

When the mind is tamed through meditation, no problems of either war or human destiny are beyond the power of mankind to change and influence, especially when we realize that *the source of war lies with ourselves.* This

principle is embodied in the preamble to the UNESCO charter on Human Rights which states, *'Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed'.*

Power Of Loving-Kindness and Righteousness

In meditation there must be purity in the mind. There is an interesting *Jataka* story on the real value of radiating loving kindness. *(Jataka* stories are about the past lives of the Buddha-to-be in his search for Enlightenment. These stories reinforce some moral points.)

Once upon a time, the Buddha-to-be was leading an ascetic life and he concentrated on radiating his loving-kindness to all living beings. The king of that country was a very understanding and righteous ruler who ruled the country with compassion. He wanted to find out whether there was anyone who was dissatisfied with his way of ruling the country. But he could not find anyone who had any complaints to make.

Thinking that the people were afraid to complain to him personally, he disguised himself as an ordinary man, and went to find out the feelings of his people.

As he was walking, he saw an ascetic sitting under a tree. He asked the man what he was doing there. The man replied that he had been meditating under that tree for a long period of time. The meditator then offered a fruit from that tree to the

king to eat. Everybody knew that the fruit from that particular tree was very bitter.

When he was asked to eat, the king inquired, 'How can I eat this fruit? It is bitter.' Then the meditator told him, 'Don't worry! Just take one bite.' The king took one bite and found it to be very sweet'.

The meditator then explained to the king, 'I have been radiating my loving-kindness for a long period under this tree. As a result, the atmosphere of this area has changed, even to the extent of making the bitter fruit become sweet and edible. And there is another reason. The king of this country is a very kind, understanding and righteous ruler. His righteousness has also helped to purify the atmosphere. These are the two reasons why the bitter fruit became sweet.'

Sublime State of Mind

Meditation is that brightness in the mind which prepares the way for action; and without that there is no love.

If every person in this world were to radiate lovingkindness, compassion and understanding towards others, there should not be any fear, tension, or suspicion. Everybody can live in peace and in harmony. The world will be a safer place for all humanity.

When you observe some people carefully, you will notice how they behave, how they talk and how they maintain their poise of gentleness and cheerfulness even when they are

confronted by others. You can say that such persons are above the ordinary people. Their appearance should indicate the development of their minds. On the other hand, there are those who try to show their cleverness or superiority by maintaining a proud attitude. This indicates immaturity or shallowness of their minds. Every individual has his own intrinsic character or behaviour and we can categorize each as being imbued with an animal nature, devilish nature, human nature, or divine nature.

Meditation is a method we can use to tame the animal and devilish nature within us. Some people do not behave as cultured people. They are rough and crude. They are most intolerant. This clearly shows that they have not tamed their animal or devilish nature although they are human beings.

By controlling such weaknesses, a cultured person proves his real humane qualities, by upholding human dignity and intelligence. The divine nature prevails in one who has attained noble or sublime states of mind. It is a perfect life where there are no taints and where no evil is committed. Such people are pleasing to everybody, even to non-human beings. Understanding people always maintain a balanced mind. The Buddha says, *'Contentment is the highest wealth.'* If we can have this attitude, we can maintain our peace and happiness. However, this does not mean that we should not work hard to earn our living. Contentment should not be used as an excuse for laziness and not trying hard enough. Today man has forgotten the value of contentment. That is why there is so much unhealthy competition among men.

We have forgotten and neglected the ancient wisdom. Mahatma Gandhi once said: 'Here in this world we can find everything to satisfy our needs but not our greed.' Again, he said: 'Fewer the needs, greater the Happiness.'

In his book *'The Second Krishnamurti Reader'* the author says,

Meditation is the awakening of bliss; it is both of the senses and transcending them. It has no continuity, for it is not of time. The happiness and the joy of relationship, the sight of a cloud carrying the earth, and the light of spring on the leaves, are the delight of the eye and of the mind. This delight can be cultivated by thought and given a duration in the space of memory, but it is not the bliss of meditation in which is included the intensity of the senses. Thought is **like** the smoke of a fire and bliss is the fire without the cloud of smoke that brings tears to the eyes. Pleasure is one thing, and bliss another. Pleasure is the bondage of thought, and bliss is beyond and above thought. The foundation of meditation is the understanding of thought and of pleasure, with their morality and the discipline which gives comfort. The bliss of meditation is not of time or duration; it is beyond both and therefore not measurable. Its ecstasy is not in the eye of the beholder, nor is it an experience of the thinker.

Healthy Mind and Body

We have organised our life in a way which we thought can bring us enjoyment, but little do we realise that we are only deluding ourselves. The modern world creates excitement

but not happiness. This excitement disturbs our minds and upsets our nervous systems. Meditation is the only way to calm the mind and the nervous system in order to help us to lead a healthy life through spiritual development.

The Buddha has said, *'Health is the highest gain.'* If we neglect our health, no matter what we gain, we will lead a very miserable life. It is already established that meditation is the remedy for many physical and mental sicknesses. Medical authorities and great psychologists the world over say that mental frustration, worries, miseries, anxieties, tension, and fear are the cause of many diseases. And even latent sickness will be aggravated through such mental conditions.

Naturally, the untrained mind is very elusive and persuades people to commit evil and become slaves of the senses. Imagination and emotions always mislead man if his mind is not properly trained. One who knows how to practise meditation will be able to control his mind when it is misled by the senses.

Most of the troubles we are confronting today are due to the untrained and uncultured mind.

The Buddha discovered that meditation is the only way to find peace and realize the ultimate of life. He had, therefore, made the practice of mindfulness central to his Teaching.

Mindfulness, then can be summarised as:

- the unfailing master key for *knowing* the mind, and is thus the starting point;

- the perfect tool for *shaping* the mind, and is thus the focal point;

- the lofty manifestation of the achieved *freedom* of the mind, and is thus the culminating point.

The Buddha made it very clear that this is the only method for us to gain final liberation from an unsatisfactory existence in this life.

To have a healthy body and mind and to have peace in life, one must learn how to practise meditation. The Buddha gained his Enlightenment through the development of his mind. He did not seek divine power to help him. He gained his wisdom through self-effort by practising meditation.

The most difficult task facing the meditator is to tame the mind. It is not impossible for a serious meditator to attain his goal. The Buddha has said: 'Bhikkhus, a man of energetic perseverance will succeed in all his endeavour.'

Buddhist meditation has no other purpose than to be mindful of the present, i.e., the state of fully awakened consciousness, by clearing from it all obstacles that have been created by habit or tradition.

What is important is not the theory. views, opinions, or concepts about meditation, but to have the patience to strive on diligently with the practice of meditation as taught in the *Satipatthana Sutta.* Practise it quietly and observe the results. Come and follow the ancient path by taking up the Buddha's clarion call of *'Ehi Passiko': 'Come and See'* for yourself.

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